

SECRET

Approved For Release 2005/01/05 : CIA-RDP79R01142A000600060012-4

TAB F 25X1

14 May 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Coverage of Events in the Gulf of Thailand  
Prior to the Seizure of the Mayaguez

1. The first indication of a threat to shipping in the Gulf of Thailand was received by US operational forces on 4 May 1975. On that date, the USS GRIDLEY advised that it had received merchant ship communications reporting the capture of a Korean tanker by an "unidentified Communist ship" in an area in the general vicinity of Poulo Wai island (where the Mayaguez was subsequently captured). This report was immediately passed by the CINCPAC Intelligence Center to the NMCC which, in turn, immediately passed it to the CIA Operations Center. Because of CINCPAC's use of an "Address Indicator Group" (AIG 8724), it is safe to assume that its initial message also went to a large number of operational commands and intelligence centers within the Defense establishment. In any event, there is no evidence that anyone took any action on this report.

2. On 5 May, CINCPAC advised the NMCC (and other addressees) of a US news service report of the incident involving the Korean tanker. This report indicated a Cambodian Communist ship had fired upon, damaged, but failed to stop the Korean tanker. STATE/INR picked up this account of the news service report and a 5 May FBIS item from Seoul, which dealt with the same incident, and prepared a briefing paper for Mr. Hyland and Secretary Kissinger on the same day. No other element in the US intelligence community took any action.

3. On 6 May, the FBIS reported in its Daily Report that Seoul had advised the South Korean Ministry of Transportation to alert all Korean shipping to the dangers of Communist attacks "on the high seas of Cambodia."

SECRET

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/01/05 : CIA-RDP79R01142A000600060012-4

SECRET

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/01/05 : CIA-RDP79R01142A000600060012-4

4. NSA reports (issued, interalia, to the community, beginning on 7 May) reveal that Cambodian attacks on foreign shipping actually began on 2 May. They also reveal that from 2 May until the seizure of the Mayaguez on 12 May, the Cambodians, in at least 5 separate incidents, either fired on or detained some 17 vessels (See Annex attached). One of these, a Panamanian freighter, was the subject of a 9 May NSA report, the gist of which was conveyed by Mr. Lehman of OCI during the DCI's morning staff meeting of that date. But we know of no other similar briefings or reports provided elsewhere in the community. (That same 9 May report also stated that, according to the master of the Panamanian vessel, the Cambodians had extended their territorial waters some 30 n.m. beyond Paulo Wai Island. There is no other evidence of such an extension.)

5. The seizure of the Mayaguez appears to have caught everyone by surprise. Neither CIA, DIA, nor the military services issued any report or analysis which would have indicated their consideration of a potential threat situation. No warning notices were issued.

6. The US agency responsible for issuing "notices to mariners" is the Hydrographic Center of the Defense Mapping Agency. There is no formal link between this agency and any current intelligence entity, and as far as we can ascertain at this juncture, intelligence concerning incidents in the Gulf of Thailand (2-12 May) was not sent to the Hydrographic Center\* by any element of the community.

*\* A call from my office to the DOTA at 1835 Hrs. tonight was answered by a recording.*

Lieutenant General, USA  
Deputy to the DCI for the  
Intelligence Community

25X1

SECRET

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/01/05 : CIA-RDP79R01142A000600060012-4